487 up and down the slopes in a straight line are a real nightmare for any non-Murundi.

Another circumstance which makes journeying more
491 arduous is that in spite of the innumerable streams and rivers there are hardly any bridges (ikiraro) in the whole of Urundi and Ruanda. The chief reason for this defect is the lack of suitable timber in these treeless areas. Even where there is still a sufficient number of trees, a bridge is built only in very rare cases since the entire width of the valley bottoms is usually covered with reed or papyrus swamps through the middle of which weaves a narrow, open watercourse. The swamps are too wide for building bridges.

Usually there is no other way but to wade through the swampy valley bottoms and streams up to one's knees or hips in the black, stinking morass. Only rarely are papyrus fronds or reeds cut down in bunches and piled next to each other and on top of each other to form a kind of floating bridge which prevents the travelers from sinking too deeply into the swamp. When reaching wide, open rivers, such as the Ruvuvu, Akanjaru, Luvironsa, and others, the traveler seeks out well-known fords and wades across, often up to his shoulders in water, and he uses a stick or a spear for support against the force of the
[482] stream. Everything that has to be kept dry must be carried in a bundle on the head. At the same time there is much shouting to frighten away the crocodiles. If the river is too deep,
501 dugouts are used for the crossing, and the shore dwellers make
505 a living at this. [72] If only a few persons and light burdens have to be ferried across, primitive rafts (ikitebo) are used. They are made of several layers of dried papyrus sticks which are tied together (Plate 26b). The rafts may be used a few times until they have soaked up too much water. On the Malagarasi River, large tubs made of tree bark are used. They are big enough for one man or one burden and are pulled and pushed across the river by two or three men who have to swim (No. 19, p. 448).

491 If it happens that a big tree is standing near a deep stream which cannot be forded, it is transformed into a bridge

Plate 5

482
133

Ford in the Ruvuvu River East of Mugera
(Photo. by Hans Meyer, 1911)

505
133

Crossing the Ruvuvu River near Kihansa
(Photo. by Hans Meyer, 1911)